



# DEI Collection Development Toolkit

## Introduction

Providing access to resources in support of student success, community development, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) serves as a core principle of academic libraries in the twenty-first century. The North Carolina Community College Library Association (NCCCLA) Equity Committee believes that we cannot live up to this principle without ensuring equitable access to collections of inclusive learning materials that reflect our communities and represent our users, particularly those from historically marginalized groups.

Cultivating such collections goes beyond ensuring diversity of authors or subjects. As community college librarians, we must strive to understand the unique needs and perspectives of marginalized and underrepresented groups within our learning communities in order to provide resources that support their success. We hope that this toolkit will help you lay the groundwork to develop more thoughtful, inclusive, and equitable collections.

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## Learning Outcomes

### **Access**

Using the toolkit resources, you will be able to:

- ◆ Identify and select appropriate DEI materials in various formats for your collections.
- ◆ Identify and select resources that promote non-mainstream authors.

### **Action**

Using the toolkit resources, you will be able to:

- ◆ Build welcoming library collections that support all users and respect differences, diversity, and intersectionality.
- ◆ Implement collection development practices that will promote equity and engagement among diverse users, particularly those historically or institutionally underrepresented.

### **Assessment**

Using the toolkit resources, you will be able to:

- ◆ Create/revise collection development policy/procedures to assess that they reflect DEI needs within your collections.
- ◆ Identify at least one underserved population within your community of users and develop/promote the collection with culturally diverse resources that serve this population.
- ◆ Analyze your budget annually with a view to reallocating funds to cultivate an equitable collection.

### **Advocacy**

Using the toolkit resources, you will be able to:

- ◆ Recognize how oppression and racism are historically encoded within American library systems.
- ◆ Explain current equity, diversity, and inclusion issues relating to libraries, and implement changes within the context of your own libraries.
- ◆ Reflect on how your own identity/background influences your personal and institutional biases as a library employee and be mindful of this when developing your library collections.
- ◆ Engage with your community inclusively about social justice issues, as well as how identity shapes your library collections.
- ◆ Develop a more structured communication plan/unified approach to collection development advocacy for your respective libraries and all NC community college libraries.

## Collection Development Overview

You should use your training, knowledge, and experience to select materials that meet the curricular, extra-curricular and recreational needs of students, staff, faculty, and community members who use your library. Your collections should promote literacy, protect users against censorship, and provide knowledge through a variety of material types.

### Learn

- ◆ Review your collection development policy to ensure that it reflects your college’s mission.
- ◆ Conduct a review of current collections to identify gaps in representation. (See the “Conducting an Audit” section)
- ◆ Consult professional journals, curated lists through book vendors, and American Library Association (ALA) resources to select inclusive materials for your collections.
- ◆ Provide high-quality materials that are responsive, culturally sensitive, and reflective of the diversity and needs of the community your library serves. (See the “Conducting an Audit” section)
- ◆ Selection criteria should include but are not limited to the following:
  - ◇ Relevance
  - ◇ Accuracy
  - ◇ Format
  - ◇ Credibility of the author
  - ◇ Reputation of the publisher
  - ◇ Readability
  - ◇ Literary merit
  - ◇ Organization and presentation of information
  - ◇ Subject or material
  - ◇ Reviews in professional journals or ratings in curated lists
  - ◇ Community needs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Suitable subject and style of the reading level of the target audience</li> <li>◇ Reasonably priced</li> <li>◇ Relationship with like items in the collection</li> <li>◇ Representative of various interests and viewpoints</li> <li>◇ Lasting value to the collection</li> </ul>
Connect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Make resources available to all North Carolina community college libraries and their users through Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services, while prioritizing use for the students, staff, faculty and community users from your home institution.</li> <li>◆ Create observance displays to highlight collections, to raise awareness, and to celebrate diverse experiences and voices.</li> <li>◆ Share stories of successes and challenges of connecting with your community and other libraries through participation in conferences, webinars, social media, other professional connection opportunities, etc.</li> </ul>
Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Offer support to students, staff, faculty, and community members on their research through electronic and print resources.</li> <li>◆ Sponsor programming that connects your community with materials that deepen their understanding of and engagement with DEI issues.</li> <li>◆ Create resource lists focusing on current material drawing attention to regional and statewide issues written by local authors.</li> <li>◆ Seek out grant and funding opportunities to help your institution improve the diversity of your collections</li> <li>◆ Attend discussion panels, webinars and presentations at conferences to help expand diversity in collections and how to pull statistical data relating to your collections.</li> </ul>
Reflect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Assess your collection through statistical data found in your integrated library systems (ILS).</li> <li>◆ Assess your collections periodically, removing items that no longer support your community's DEI needs or are no longer current.</li> <li>◆ Review your collection development policy regularly, including factors related to DEI (See the "Conducting an Audit" section for suggestions).</li> <li>◆ Gather regular feedback from students, staff, faculty, and community members to get their input.</li> </ul>

## Collaborate

- ◆ Consult with colleagues around the state to learn more about new materials that may meet your communities' needs and provide new perspectives.
- ◆ Partner with the community-at-large (public libraries, colleges, local organizations, etc.) for programs to highlight diverse collections and engage with your local community.

## Conducting an Audit

### **Checklist for Evaluating Your Collection Development Policy for Equity**

Does your policy address how library materials are selected, retained, and removed?

- ◆ Library materials should be selected and retained for many reasons, including supporting the curriculum; meeting research needs; adding relevance to library collections; appealing to library users; and earning favorable reviews. Additionally, they should be selected and retained at the requests of library users, including students, faculty, staff, and community recommendations.
- ◆ For a list of common selection criteria, see the Collection Development Overview section.
- ◆ Your policy should identify the model and/or criteria ( [MUSTIE](#), [CREW](#), etc.) to be used when considering library materials for removal.
- ◆ Your policy should specify how frequently the policy itself will be reviewed as well as when and how often the collection will be reviewed.
- ◆ Your policy should include a statement on how students, faculty, staff, and community members will be involved in the selection and deselection processes (i.e., faculty will be able to review items suggested for removal before those items are withdrawn from the collection).
- ◆ Collection development is an ongoing process to meet the changing curricular, extra-curricular and recreational needs of students, staff, faculty, and community members.

Does your policy address how equity plays a part in acquiring library materials?

- ◆ Materials and authors representing differing viewpoints and experiences are selected for the collection including, but not limited to, the following categories:

- ◇ Educational backgrounds
- ◇ Economic backgrounds
- ◇ Cultural heritages
- ◇ Social, sexual, or gender identity
- ◇ Social, sexual, or gender expression
- ◇ Religious beliefs
- ◇ Political beliefs
- ◇ Race and ethnicity
- ◇ National origins
- ◇ Immigration status
- ◇ Neurodivergence
- ◇ Multiple formats are selected for the collection.
- ◇ Materials from alternative sources, such as independent publishers or self-published works, are selected for the collection.
- ◇ Materials that are accessible to all patrons regardless of ability are selected for the collection.
- ◇ Mental health
- ◇ Ability
- ◇ Parental status
- ◇ Military status
- ◇ Age
- ◇ For additional categories, please see: [Types of Diversity in the Workplace You Need to Know](#) from Built In

Does your policy include a statement on controversial material?

- ◆ Library materials that are frequently considered controversial and subject to challenge include but are not limited to the following categories:
  - ◇ Social issues
  - ◇ Economic issues
  - ◇ Religious views
  - ◇ Political views
  - ◇ Scientific views
  - ◇ Frank or offensive language
  - ◇ Sexual identity
  - ◇ Gender identity
- ◆ Your policy should include a statement regarding challenged library materials. This statement should explain how a challenge to library material should be submitted and to whom, the process to be followed while reviewing challenged library material, and the administrative hierarchy to be followed if the initial review of challenged material is unsatisfactory to the library user presenting the challenge.
- ◆ Your policy should include a statement acknowledging that some library material has provenance, providing a historical perspective or historical value. This statement may acknowledge an awareness that certain language and certain viewpoints in some library materials have evolved and may now be controversial while recognizing that such material may be retained as part of the collection for the historical perspective or historical value it chronicles.

Does your policy include a statement of support for intellectual freedom?

- ◆ Your policy should acknowledge support for the [Library Bill of Rights](#), [Freedom to Read Statement](#), and [Freedom to View Statement from ALA](#), and other such statements as may be appropriate to an individual institution.

## How to Conduct a Collection Audit for Equity

Who are your readers? Who are your information seekers? Who are your researchers?

- ◆ Investigate your unique community.
  - ◇ What is the composition of your campus?
  - ◇ What is the composition of your surrounding community, county, city, etc.?
- ◆ Gather data on your community.
  - ◇ Internal campus resources can be used to gather data about your campus. These include (but are not limited to) the Registrar, Institutional Effectiveness, Student Affairs, Veterans Affairs, student clubs, etc.
  - ◇ [IPEDs](#) provides data on academic libraries throughout the United States.
  - ◇ The [U.S. Census Bureau](#) provides data about your community, such as population total, demographic statistics, economic information, etc.

What materials are contained in your library?

- ◆ Survey your collection to determine what already exists.
  - ◇ Execute keyword searches. While not exhaustive, the chart below contains suggestions for these searches:

Demographics/Population	Ex. African American, Latino or Hispanic American, Arab American, Asian American, Native American, veterans, etc.
Ability/Age	Ex. Abled, disabled, ageism, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Asperger's, etc.
Gender/Sexual Orientation	Ex. Women's Studies, LGBTQIA, etc.
Multiculturalism	Ex. Ethnic groups, refugees, immigrants, countries, translations, etc.
Religion/Religious Thought	Ex. Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Atheism, Wicca, etc.
Mental Health	Ex. Bipolar, depression, schizophrenia, anxiety, etc.
Family Structure	Ex. Same sex parents, interracial families, blended families, adoption, foster care, etc.

When examining your collection using your catalog, consider whether there are any derogatory or denigrating keyword(s) or subject heading(s) used for older items and how these may affect retrieval for library user

- ◆ Run reports (if necessary) from the catalog to help with future decisions.
  - ◇ The reports can be used to remove items from your collection, to guide you in future purchases, and to show you areas for improvement (such as outdated keywords/search terms).
  - ◇ The reports can be used to evaluate your collection by format (print, electronic, etc.).
  - ◇ The reports can be used to evaluate your collection by access point, particularly if you update keyword/search terms in your catalog.

What library materials does your community want or need?

- ◆ Ask your community during transactions at the circulation or reference desk and other interactions.
- ◆ Conduct surveys, hold focus groups, or poll remotely via social media.
- ◆ Collect recommendations via a physical suggestion box and/or virtual suggestion form on your website.
- ◆ Consult administrators for awareness of new programs under development and new clubs being sponsored.

What is missing from your collection(s)?

- ◆ Compare the results of your collection searches with your collection holdings; consider any discrepancies between the community served and the search results from the catalog.
- ◆ Examine loan statistics (including interlibrary loan requests), turn-away statistics, failed catalog and/or discovery searches, and materials purchased through patron-driven acquisition. Consider what these examinations reveal.
- ◆ Conduct an analysis of faculty and staff publications; consider the insights that emerge from this analysis.

How do you fill the gaps?

- ◆ Read reviews in catalogs and other professional publications, such as *Library Journal*, *Choice*, etc.
- ◆ Consult publishers, vendors, blogs, etc.
- ◆ Solicit faculty, staff, students, and community members.
- ◆ Search other campus catalogs, LibGuides, A-Z lists, etc.
- ◆ Search bookstores (online and brick-and-mortar).
- ◆ Listen to word-of-mouth reviews.
- ◆ Communicate with professional associations.
- ◆ Engage with cultural/civic groups/organizations.

How do you promote your updated collection?

- ◆ Make displays and bulletin boards for these materials.
- ◆ Make recommendations during reader's advisory consultations for library users.
- ◆ Post updates on LibGuides and social media when new materials are received or are being highlighted.
- ◆ Incorporate updates into library instruction about the acquisition or importance of these materials.
- ◆ Send emails and texts when new materials are received or are being highlighted.
- ◆ Include in programming and events, such as reading challenges and faculty brown bags.
- ◆ Search course catalogs to make curricular connections and recommendations to faculty.
- ◆ Utilize specialized processing labels or stickers for these materials.
- ◆ Designate specialized shelving or locations for these materials.

How do you maintain equity within your collection(s)?

- ◆ Establish a routine schedule to repeat the audit on your existing collections.
- ◆ Conduct an audit on book orders before purchasing.
- ◆ Conduct an audit on electronic resources before subscribing (when and where necessary).
- ◆ Remain current with both professional and popular publications.
- ◆ Network with peers and colleagues.
- ◆ Attend professional development opportunities (when and where necessary) on this topic.

## Conclusion

Though not exhaustive, this toolkit serves as a roadmap to aid community college librarians as you develop more thoughtful, inclusive, and equitable collections aimed at your specific users' needs. The tools gathered here are intended to fill a gap in the existing resources available to community college librarians. The authors recommend its use in tandem with other resources related to the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion in community college libraries.

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